

SAFETY AT WORK

Slips, Trips, & Falls

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How can I get hurt just walking?

Workers slip, trip and fall because:

1. They slipped on a liquid or granular product on the floor,
2. They slipped on paper or small parts,
3. They tripped over a pallet or other objects on or near the floor,
4. They tripped over a wrinkled floor mat,
5. They fell or stepped into an unguarded hole,
6. They fell because they couldn't see over the materials they were carrying.

You can prevent slips, trips and falls by:

1. Maintaining good housekeeping,
2. Carrying materials safely, and
3. Guarding all floor holes, open-sided floors, and skylights.

Maintain good housekeeping

Proper housekeeping procedures can eliminate slip, trip, and fall hazards.

- Don't allow *anyone* to leave *anything* on the stairs or walkways.
 - Boxes and other items can block access to stairs and can cause workers to trip and fall.
 - Items like pens and pencils, paper, trash, paperclips, etc. on the stairs can cause workers' feet to slip out from under them and result in a fall.



- Make sure the walkway is clear, clean, and unobstructed.
- Clean up liquids, granular products, and other slippery substances on floors as soon as possible.
- Pick up anything that could cause someone to slip and fall [paper, pencils & pens, small parts, tools, banding, etc.].
- Pick up anything that someone could trip over [pallets, boxes, cords, etc.].
- Make sure mats and other floor coverings are not wrinkled or have upturned corners.
- Make sure you have good lighting so everyone can see where they are going.
- Mark step-ups and step-downs (including stair risers) with caution tape or brightly colored paint so they are easy to see.
- Clear snow and ice off of walkways as soon as possible, and put salt or other melting agents on the walkway to keep it clear.
- Make sure the access to emergency equipment (emergency disconnects, fire extinguishers, etc.) are clear so workers won't get hurt trying to get to them.

- Carry materials so you can see over them to the floor or stairs ahead of you. If you can't see where you're going, you can't adjust.
- Don't carry objects in both hands when ascending or descending stairs. Keep one hand on the stair rail.
- Carry materials that are a safe size and weight so you won't get thrown off balance and fall while carrying them.
- *Actively* watch where you are going ... *Look* for hazards in your path of travel. Don't assume your path is clear.
- Make sure your footwear is adequate for the job you are doing and the surfaces you will be working on. Your footwear should grip the floor and not be prone to slipping and sliding.

Guard floor holes and openings, open-sided floors, and skylights

Floor Holes

- Replace any removable covers or flooring that has been removed as soon as possible (not when you get around to it).
- Cover any opening in the floor with a material that will support the weight of any person or equipment that could pass over the floor hole.
- Barricade any floor hole or other opening that you can't cover properly. Don't leave a floor hole exposed or unattended for any length of time.
- Secure any floor cover you use so it can't slide off of the hole when someone steps on it.



- You could place a standard guardrail around a floor hole if you don't want to put a cover over the hole.

Open-sided Floors

Any time a floor surface is four feet or more above the adjacent floor or ground, the opening must be guarded.

- Guard open-sided floors with a standard guardrail.
- A standard guardrail system consists of the following elements:
 - A top rail and intermediate rail;
 - A standard toeboard must be provided whenever a person could pass beneath the landing, or where falling materials could damage moving machinery or equipment. (A standard toeboard is 4 inches in height above the floor surface and cannot have a gap between the floor and the bottom of the toeboard of more than ¼-inch.)
 - The top rail of the guardrail system must be able to support 200 pounds of pressure from any direction at any point along the rail.

Skylights

- Put a guard over all skylights or directly under the skylight opening. The guard must be able to support at least 200 pounds.



- A standard guardrail could also be installed around skylights or other roof openings.